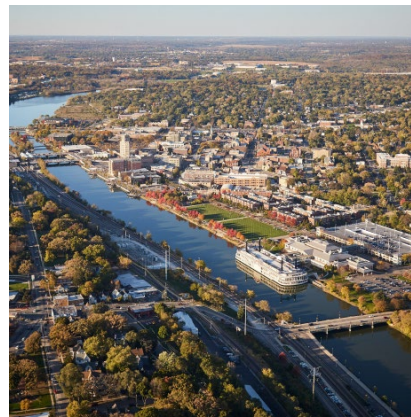
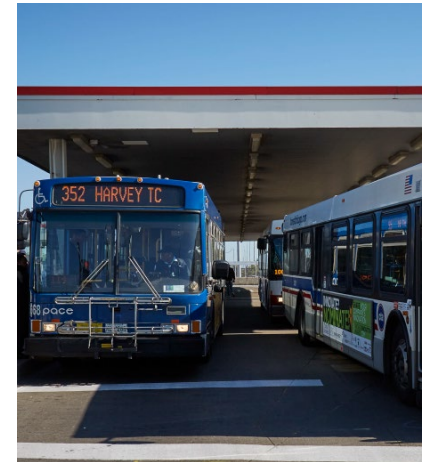


Regional ADA Coordinators Group

February 11, 2025





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Agency for Planning

Access check





Access check

Visibility

- Read meeting slides and describe images
- Enable closed captioning
- Let us know if you need more time with a difficult slide!

Acoustics

- Use mics (for in-person attendees)
- Mute when not speaking
- Let us know if we are speaking too quietly, too quickly, etc.

Access check

Participation

- Use the chat or raise hand function
- Introduce yourself and your affiliation every time you speak
- Direct message Kaitlin Cernak (CMAP) if you want to ask a question anonymously

Other

- Restrooms located near the elevator bays



Meeting agreement

- This is a safe space to share and learn.
- CMAP is not an enforcement agency or reporting agency; we're here to provide support.
- Conversation is strongly encouraged!
Please ask questions, share experiences, drop comments, etc.
- Meetings will not be recorded but we will share slides and resource links.



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Agenda and introductions





Agenda

1. Agenda and introductions
2. Role of the ADA Coordinator
3. Compliance management
4. Peer discussion
5. Case studies
6. 10-minute break
7. Disability advocacy
8. Group discussion
9. Meeting close

If this is your first time attending, please take this quick survey!



Meet CMAP's Accessible Communities team



Jaemi Jackson
Planning Principal,
Accessibility Program Manager



Jeffrey Nolish
Senior ADA Planner



Caroline Caruso
Planning Intern



Sema Abulhab
Senior Engagement
Specialist



Kaitlin Cernak
Senior Communications
Specialist

CMAP's Accessible Communities program

- Completed **16 training workshops**, **460+ attendees** from **140 organizations** including **86 municipalities**
- Technical assistance for public right-of-way ADA self-evaluations and transition plans
- NEW! [Templates and guidance for ADA public notice, ADA coordinator designation, grievance procedure](#)
- Newsletter – sign up at **cmap.illinois.gov**



cmap.is/accessibility



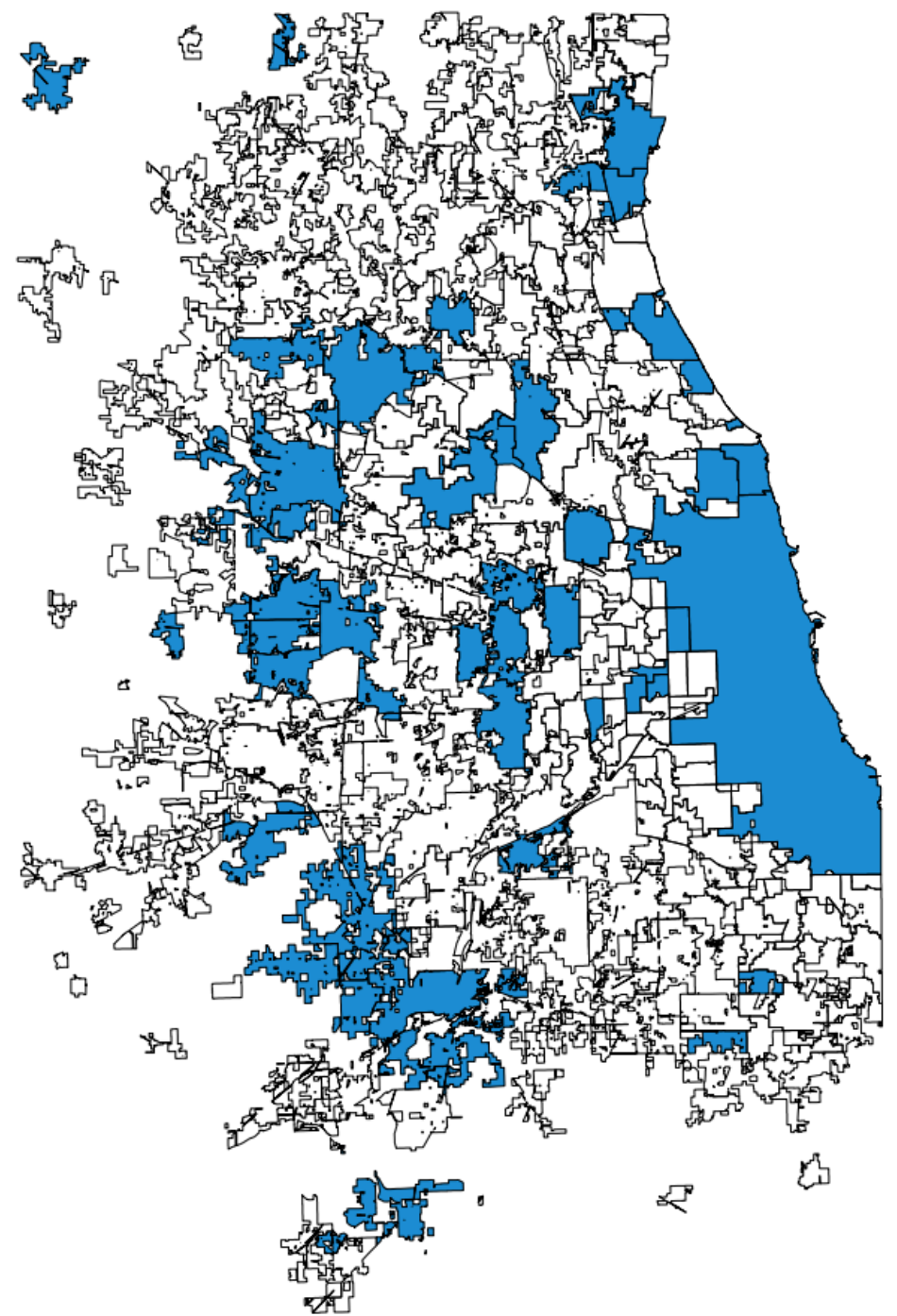
Regional ADA Coordinators Group

- Provide ADA coordinators with practical, actionable knowledge and resources
- Space for ADA coordinators to connect with each other to share lessons learned and challenges
- Meet 12 times over 2 years (today is meeting two)



Who's who in the room?

Connect with other communities and invite those who haven't attended yet!





Who's who in the room?

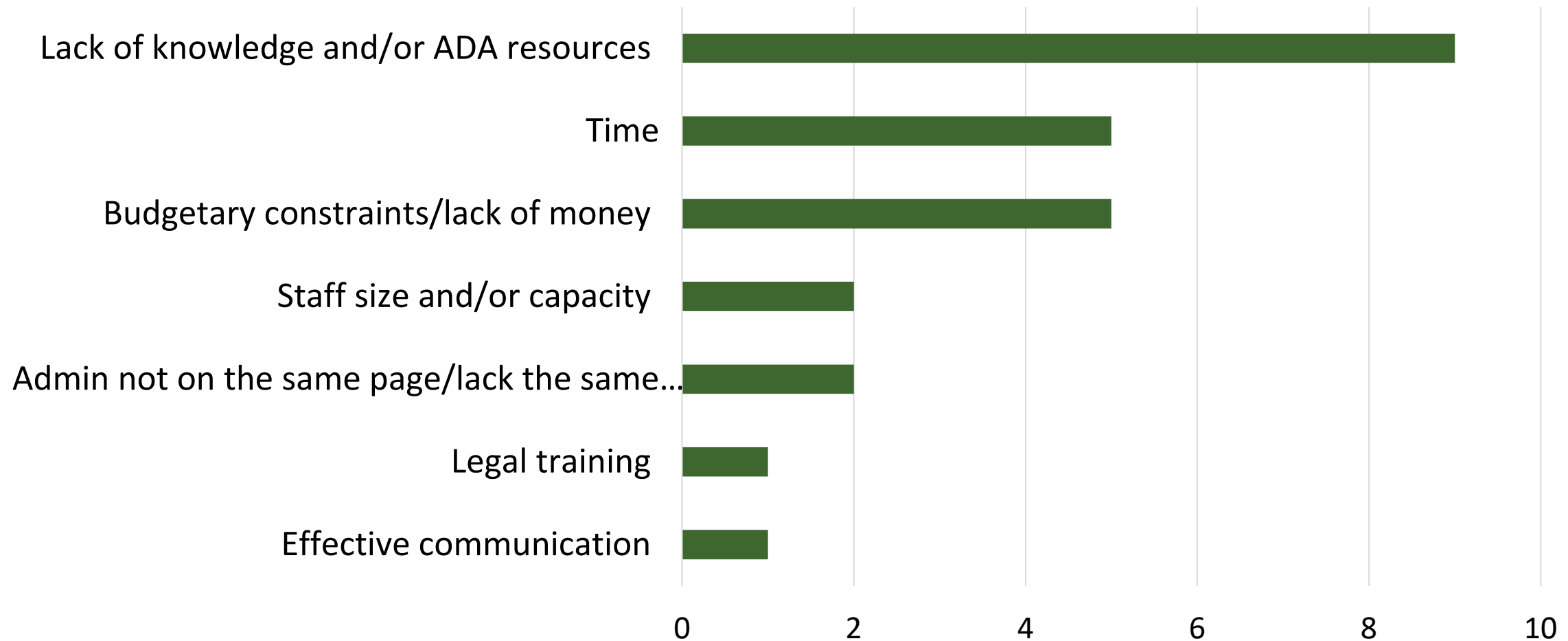
Community feedback:

Should CMAP share our database of regional ADA coordinators with attendees?



Throwback: survey takeaways

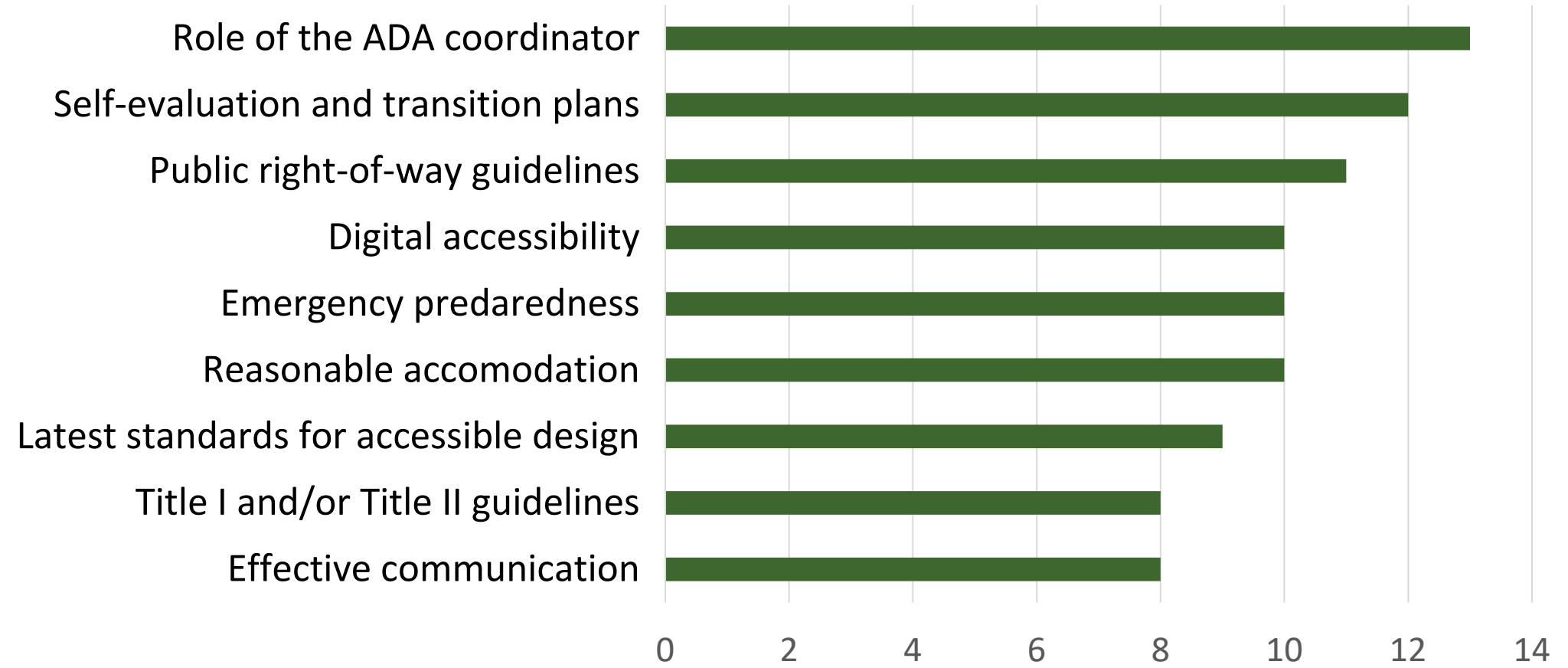
What are the barriers/challenges of your role as ADA coordinator?





Throwback: survey takeaways

What information, resources, and topic areas would be valuable to you as an ADA coordinator?



Throwback: web accessibility

Check out this NEW webinar on web content accessibility!

Email ccaruso@cmap.Illinois.gov for slides and resources from the first meeting.



www.ada.gov/title-ii-web-rule/

Posted on ADA.gov January 16, 2025

Future meeting topics

- March 18: Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan Part I
- May 13: Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan Part II



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Role of the ADA Coordinator





Titles under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Title 1: Employment

Title 2: State and Local Government Services

Title 3: Businesses that are Open to the Public

Title 4: Telecommunications

Title 5: Other Important Requirements



ADA Title II obligations

All public entities must:

- Provide public notice about the ADA
- Conduct an ADA self-evaluation

Public entities with 50 or more employees are also required to:

- Designated an employee to oversee Title II compliance (ADA coordinator)
- Establish a grievance procedure
- Develop a transition plan based on self-evaluation



How can you meet these obligations?

All public entities must:

- **Provide public notice about the ADA**
- Conduct an ADA self-evaluation

Public entities with 50 or more employees are also required to:

- **Designate an employee to oversee Title II compliance (ADA coordinator)**
- **Establish a grievance procedure**
- Develop a transition plan based on self-evaluation



Qualities of an ADA Coordinator

Knowledge

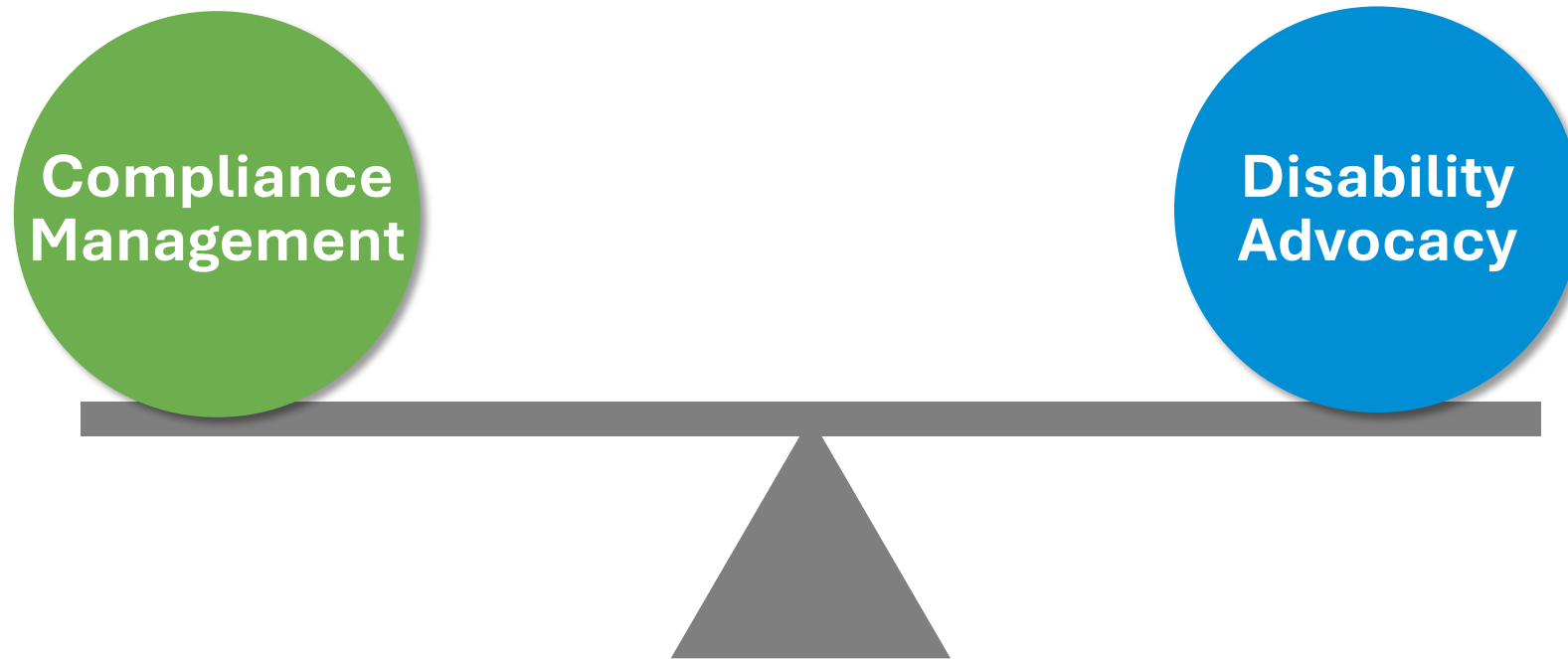
- Disability laws and regulations at the federal, state, and local levels
- Your municipality's programs, services, activities, departments, and personnel

Skills

- Strong communication skills
- Conflict-resolution and mediation
- Organization and coordination

Responsibilities of the ADA coordinator

Balancing responsibilities
of **compliance manager** and **disability advocate**





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Compliance management





Compliance management obligations:

All public entities must:

- **Provide public notice about the ADA**
- Conduct an ADA self-evaluation

Public entities with 50 or more employees are also required to:

- **Designate an employee to oversee Title II compliance (ADA coordinator)**
- **Establish a grievance procedure**
- Develop a transition plan based on self-evaluation



Provide public notice

CMAP has created plug-and-play templates! 

cmap.is/ADAtemplates



ADA notice template

Note the asterisks (*) in the template text below indicating best practices and additional considerations when using this template.

ADA notice under the Americans with Disabilities Act

In accordance with the requirements of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the [agency name] will not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities on the basis of disability in its services, programs, or activities.

Employment:

[agency name] does not discriminate on the basis of disability in its hiring or employment practices and complies with all regulations overseen by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission under Title I of the ADA.

Effective communication:

[agency name] will generally, upon request, provide appropriate aids and services to facilitate effective communication for individuals with disabilities so they can participate equally in [agency name] programs, services, and activities, including qualified sign language interpreters, documents in Braille, and other ways of making information and communications accessible to people who have speech, hearing, or vision impairments.*

Modifications to policies and procedures:**

[agency name] will make all reasonable modifications to policies and programs to ensure that people with disabilities have an equal opportunity to participate in its programs, services, and activities.

Anyone who requires an auxiliary aid or service*** for effective communication, or a modification of policies or procedures to participate in a program, service, or activity of [agency name] should contact [insert name and contact information for ADA coordinator] as soon as possible but no later than [5 business days****] prior to the scheduled event to ensure sufficient time for acquisition or modification of equipment or devices. Complaints that a program, service, or activity of [agency name] is not accessible to persons with disabilities should be directed to [insert name and contact information for ADA coordinator].



Provide public notice

- Notice informs the public that the ADA applies to services, programs, and activities of the government
- Posted in public areas and/or online

Designate an ADA coordinator

CMAP has created plug-and-play templates! 

cmap.is/ADAtemplates



Designating an ADA coordinator

Who must designate an ADA coordinator?

Public entities with 50 or more employees (either full-time or part-time) must designate at least one employee to coordinate compliance with the ADA.

What are an ADA coordinator's responsibilities?

The ADA coordinator is responsible for ensuring municipal compliance with ADA Title II regulations, facilitating accessibility initiatives, and addressing grievances or concerns related to the ADA within municipal programs, activities, or services. Depending on the size of the community, this can be a full-time position or an additional role for an existing employee or employees.

Who is the right candidate to be an ADA coordinator?

Any employee can serve as an ADA coordinator so long as that person is knowledgeable about ADA regulations and has sufficient decision-making authority in the organization to make changes and actions necessary for compliance. Common positions that serve this role include deputy municipal administrator, municipal attorney, municipal engineer, human resources representative, or a dedicated full-time ADA coordinator. In many cases, it is best practice to fill this role in house rather than engaging a third party since the ADA coordinator will serve as a representative of the organization when addressing grievances, interacting with the public, and improving internal accessibility practices — all of which benefit from a high level of knowledge of the organization and community.

The ideal candidate for an ADA coordinator role is comfortable speaking with members of the public and coordinating with a variety of people, both internal and external. They may encounter frustrated members of the public, especially when addressing grievances, so the candidate needs the ability to remain calm during tense conversations. The ADA coordinator will serve as the public entity's liaison to any ADA-related concerns in the community.



Designate an ADA coordinator

- Publish **name and title, mailing address, phone number, and email address**
- Maintain up-to-date ADA coordinator info on all appropriate documents, announcements
- Make sure the public can find the ADA coordinator!

Internal coordination

- Make sure all municipality staff know to forward grievances to the ADA coordinator!
- Establish liaisons for other departments, commissions
- Create communications templates
 - *"Thank you for contacting us about this important accessibility issue. I am forwarding your communication to our ADA Coordinator, [name]...."*



Internal coordination

Department Liaisons

_____ Department

_____ Contact Person

_____ Contact Number

_____ Contact E-mail

_____ Responsibilities

_____ Department

_____ Contact Person

_____ Contact Number

_____ Contact E-mail

_____ Responsibilities

_____ Department

_____ Contact Person

_____ Contact Number

_____ Contact E-mail

_____ Responsibilities

_____ Department

_____ Contact Person

_____ Contact Number

_____ Contact E-mail

_____ Responsibilities



ADA grievance procedure

CMAP has created plug-and-play templates! 

cmap.is/ADAtemplates



Grievance procedure template

Note the asterisks (*) in the template text below indicating best practices and additional considerations when using this template.

Grievance Procedure under the Americans with Disabilities Act

[Agency name] is committed to upholding the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and specifically the Title II regulations which prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in accessing public services, programs, and activities. Recognizing the importance of ensuring equal access for all, this grievance procedure is established to address complaints related to accessibility and public facilities, services, programs, and activities.

Who may file an ADA grievance

Any person who believes that they have been excluded participation in, denied the benefits of, or otherwise subjected to discrimination because of a disability under any [agency name] facility, service, program, or activity, may file a grievance. A grievance may also be filed on behalf of another person.

How to file an ADA grievance

Grievances should be submitted in writing and contain information about the alleged discrimination such as name, address, phone number of complainant and location, date, and description of the issue.

Grievances can be submitted through the following options:*

- In-person: Grievances may be submitted in-person at the following address: [municipal building address]
- Email: Grievances may be submitted by filling out the ADA Accessibility Complaint Form and emailing to [email address]
- Phone: Grievances may be submitted by calling [phone number]
- Online form: Grievances may be submitted via online, fillable ADA Accessibility Complaint Form [descriptive link]
- Mail: Grievances may be submitted by filling out the ADA Accessibility Complaint Form and mailed to the following address:

ADA grievance procedure

- Local governments must establish a system for **resolving complaints of disability discrimination** in a prompt and fair manner
- Applies to all public facilities, programs, activities, and communications
- Your constituents are not required to file a grievance locally – they can report directly to the U.S. Department of Justice’s Civil Rights Division

Establishing ADA grievance procedure

- Publish grievance procedure in public areas **and/or** online
- Address grievances by:
 - Responding to all communication within 15 days
 - Meeting with complainant(s)
 - Working to offer a substantive resolution
 - Retaining all complaints and responses for at least 3 years



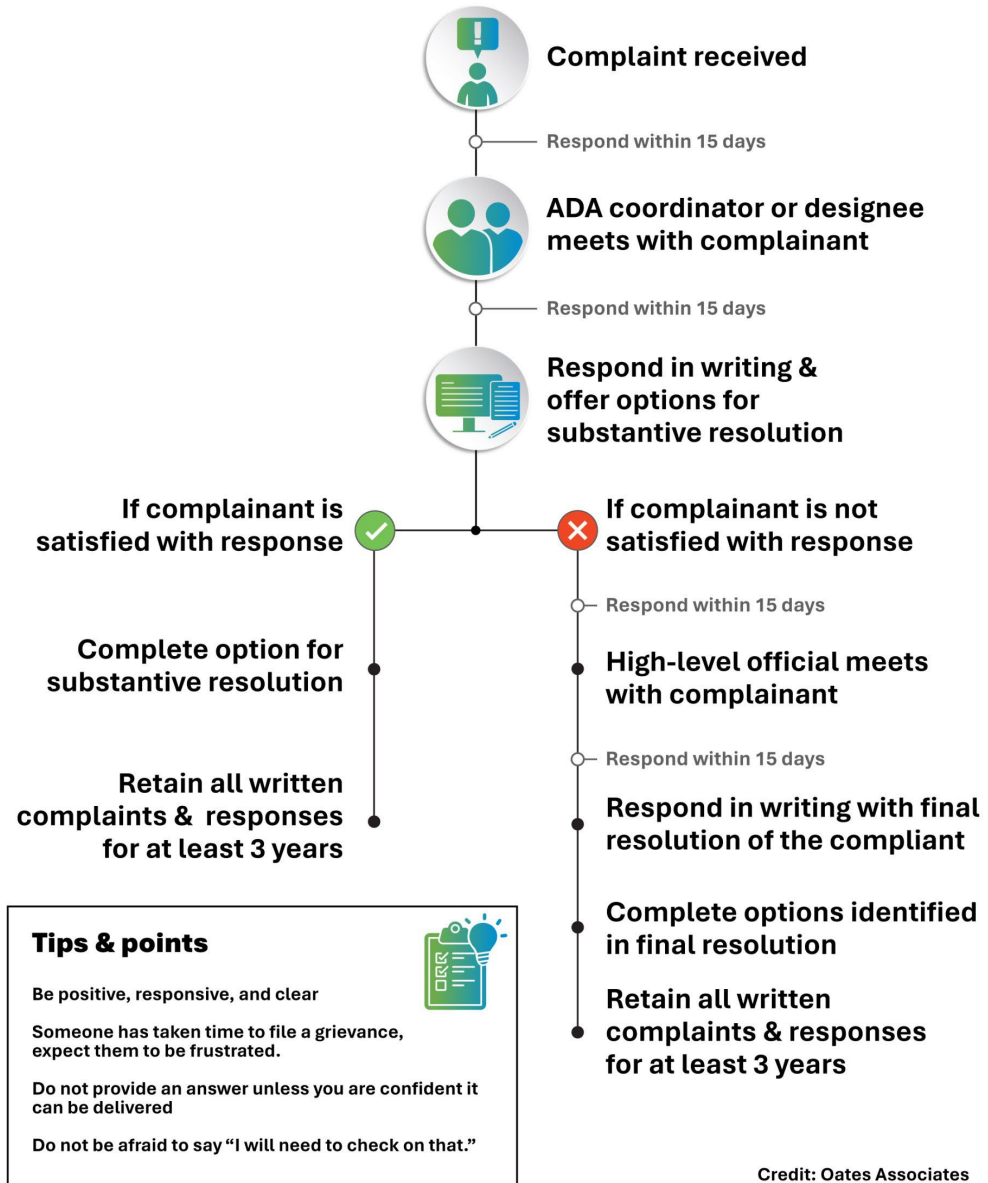
ADA grievance procedure

cmap.is/ADAtemplates



bitly

Grievance procedure flowchart



Credit: Oates Associates

Reviewing CMAP resources

- Public notice template
- ADA coordinator contact information template*
- Grievance procedure template*
- Grievance procedure flowchart*

*Required for entities with 50+ employees



cmap.is/ADAtemplates



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Peer discussion





Discussion

- ① What is your general approach to your role as ADA coordinator?
- ② How is your time divided on a daily or weekly basis?
- ③ Where do you go for knowledge/resources on the ADA?



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Case studies



Case study #1: facility access

A city renovates its council chambers and incorporates large, heavy doors in the design.

Shortly after opening, the city receives a grievance through the ADA coordinator that the doors are not accessible for all individuals.

Case study #1: facility access

**How should the
ADA coordinator
proceed?**

**How could this
situation be
prevented?**

Case study #2: effective communication

At a monthly zoning meeting, a Deaf individual cannot provide a public comment because an ASL interpreter was not available.

The next day, the individual files a grievance with the ADA coordinator and is upset. Before the zoning meeting, this individual had emailed a member of the zoning board asking for accommodations. Unsure how to proceed, the zoning board did not have time to procure an ASL interpreter.

Case study #2: effective communication

**How should the
ADA coordinator
proceed?**

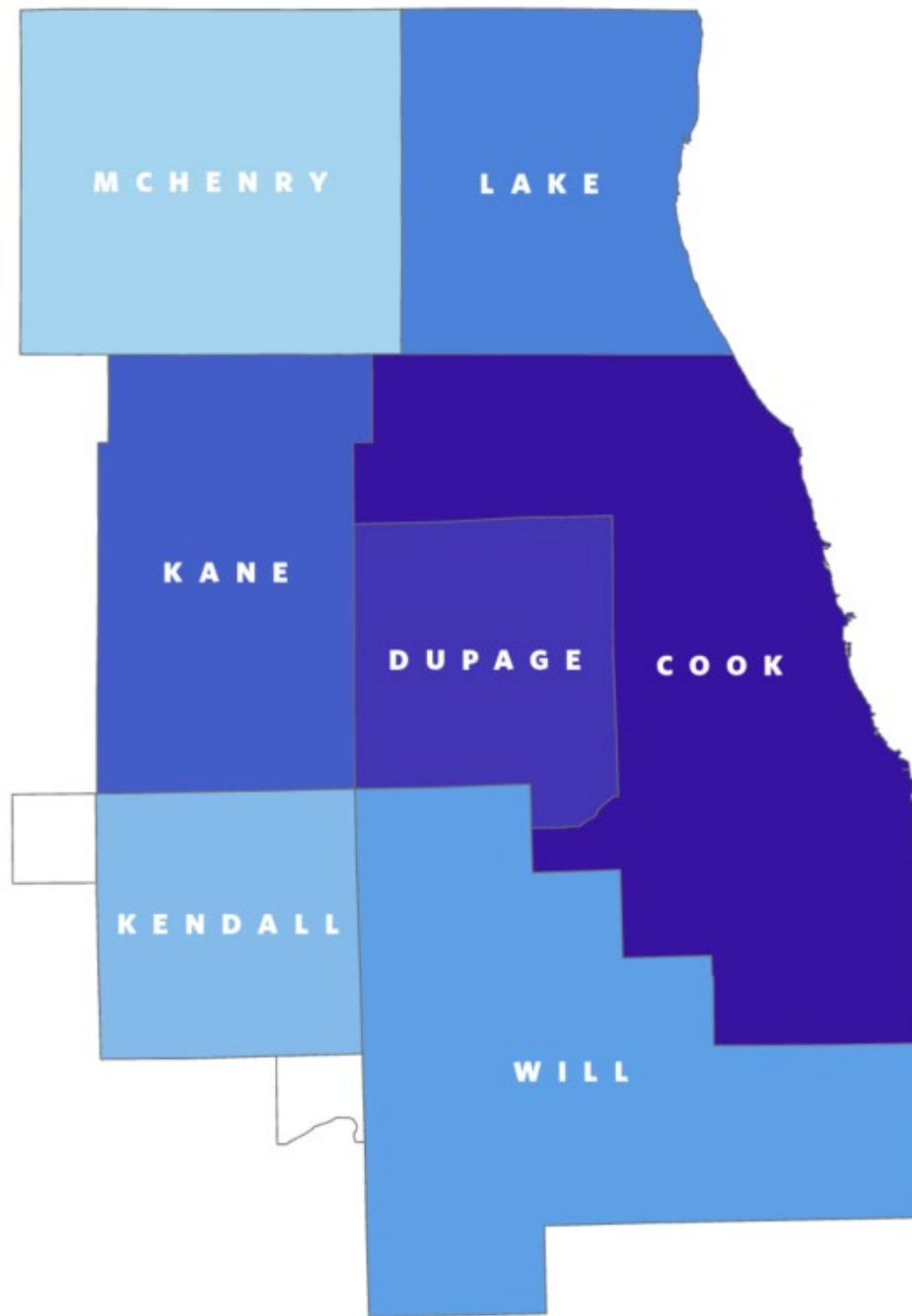
**How could this
situation be
prevented?**

Case study #2: effective communication

- Record and retain all communication in writing.
- Offer reconciliation – is there still an opportunity to submit written comments to the zoning board?
- Include ADA coordinator contact info on all communications.
- Establish a liaison within the zoning commission.
- Make sure accommodation requests have a clear, reasonable, and feasible timeline.
- Research and create a designated list of ASL interpreters for municipal meetings.

Effective communication resources

Governments are required to hire **licensed ASL interpreters**. Illinois keeps an active directory.



Licensed ASL Interpreters

McHenry	11
Kendall	13
Will	25
Lake	31
Kane	41
DuPage	56
Cook	221



IDHHC > Sign Language Interpret...

Licensed Interpreters Directory

Under the Interpreter for the Deaf Act of 2007, interpreters are required to have a license to provide interpreting services after January 1, 2009, unless an exemption applies. Interpreter licenses are based on proficiency levels. The proficiency levels determine which interpreting assignments an interpreter can accept. The actual licenses are color coded:

General-Master: Silver

General-Advanced: Green

General-Intermediate: Yellow

Provisional: Red

Case study #3: programs and services

A municipality is holding a property tax assessment appeal workshop at a local auditorium. The main entrance is only accessible by stairs, with no ramp.

After the workshop, a constituent who uses a walker files a grievance with the local ADA coordinator.

Case study #3: programs and services

**How should the
ADA coordinator
proceed?**

**How could this
situation be
prevented?**

Case study #3: programs and services

- Record and retain all communication in writing.
- Offer reconciliation – can you share content or recordings of the workshop with this individual?
- Include ADA coordinator contact info and accommodations language on all promotional materials.
- Create a designated list of accessible facilities for government programs and services.



Break

If this is your first time attending, please take this quick survey!





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Disability advocacy





What is disability?

“Disability” is a legal term and refers to a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major activity.



Purpose of the ADA

To prohibit discrimination against people with disabilities in everyday activities and ensure that individuals with disabilities have the same rights and opportunities as everyone else.



Why access matters

Individuals with disabilities often experience:

- Intentional exclusion
- Discriminatory effects of the built environment
- Communication barriers
- Outdated standards and criteria
- Overprotective rules and policies
- Limited opportunities to services, programs, activities, benefits, jobs

Why access matters

The ADA does not require that we be kind and considerate to others, but **the attitudes of others are one of the most difficult parts of having a disability.**

Learning respectful ways to interact with people with disabilities **is a form of barrier removal** to allow people to fully access programs, services, and be a part of our communities.



What is disability advocacy?

Disability advocacy is the **promotion of people with disabilities** – as well as the interests and causes of the disability community – **to improve outcomes** for, and positively impact the lives of, people with disabilities.



What is disability advocacy?

Disability advocates may present as:

- Self-advocates
- Citizen advocates
- Trained advocates
- Legal advocates
- Medical advocates
- Education advocates
- Group advocates
- Systems advocates

What is disability advocacy?

Areas of advocacy may include:

- Promoting equal opportunity
- Economic power
- Independent living
- Political participation
- Access and accommodations
- Disaster and emergency preparedness/response



Plain language

Disability advocacy uses **plain language** that does not assume who does or does not live with a disability.

“Its wording, structure, and design are so clear that the intended audience can easily find what they need, understand what they find, and use that information.”



Plain Language
Association
International

PlainLanguageNetwork.org

Why disability advocacy?

“ADA Best Practices Tool Kit for State and Local Governments” toolkit on ADA.gov

An Effective ADA Coordinator

The regulations require state and local governments with 50 or more employees to designate an employee responsible for coordinating compliance with ADA requirements. Here are some of the qualifications that help an ADA Coordinator to be effective:

- familiarity with the state or local government’s structure, activities, and employees
- knowledge of the ADA and other laws addressing the rights of people with disabilities, such as Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, 29 U.S.C. § 794
- experience with people with a broad range of disabilities
- knowledge of various alternative formats and alternative technologies that enable people with disabilities to communicate, participate, and perform tasks
- ability to work cooperatively with the local government and people with disabilities
- familiarity with any local disability advocacy groups or other disability groups
- skills and training in negotiation and mediation
- organizational and analytical skills



Why disability advocacy?

Fill gaps in experience and understanding of disability

Coordinate between the public and municipalities

“If you’ve met one person with a disability, you’ve met one person with a disability.”

Organizations in the region

Centers for Independent Living (CILs)

- **Cook County:** Access Living
- **DuPage, Kane, and Kendall counties:**
AIM Center for Independent Living
- **Lake and McHenry counties:**
Lake County Center for Independent Living
- **Will County:** Disability Resource Center

The logo for INCIL (Illinois Network of Centers for Independent Living) features the word "INCIL" in a bold, teal, sans-serif font. The letters are slightly shadowed, giving the logo a three-dimensional appearance as if it is floating above a white rectangular base.

Use the Illinois Network of
Centers for Independent
Living (INCIL)
incil.org

Organizations in the region

Coalitions and alliances

- Chicago Disabled People of Color Coalition
- The Chicagoland Alliance for Disabled-Owned Businesses

Public agencies and programs

- Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities
- Disability Rights Bureau – Illinois Attorney General
- UIC Department of Disability and Human Development
- ARC of Illinois

Find more organizations in the region

« Disability Resources In Your State



ILLINOIS DISABILITY RESOURCES AND ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS

Scroll down for links to government agencies and disability rights organizations in Illinois. They may be able assist you with:

- disability advocacy
- home health services
- home care
- nursing aide services
- Medicaid
- accessing other community resources to help people with disabilities.





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Group discussion



Group discussion: successes and challenges

- ❓ What decisions and actions set you up for success in your first month as an ADA coordinator?
- ❓ What do you wish you had known before starting?
- ❓ Are there notable aspects of your role that we have not touched upon?



Help MUSE develop accessible engagement training!

- ADA Coordinators in place for 5+ years
- ADA Coordinators in place for 6 months or less
- ADA Coordinators working on a transition plan

Email lbrack@cmap.illinois.gov to participate!



Stay informed!



cmap.is/ADAnewsletter

Sign up for CMAP's Accessible Communities newsletter



Upcoming Regional ADA Coordinators Group meetings

- March 18
- May 13



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Thank you!

@cmapillinois |    